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T O P S E C R E T 161711Z SEP 71 SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY
VIA BUNKER CHANNELS
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
TO : AMBASSADOR BUNKER, SAIGON
CITE: WH31132

SEPTEMBER 16, 1971

THE PRESIDENT IS CONVENING A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 20TH, WASHINGTON TIME, TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITH THE VIEW TOWARD PROVIDING FIRM GUIDANCE TO THE BUREAUCRACY HERE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS MEETING, HE HAS ASKED ME TO OBTAIN YOUR PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, TO INCLUDE THE SECURITY SITUATION BUT WITH EMPHASIS ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE. I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD PROVIDE THIS ASSESSMENT, VIA THIS CHANNEL, NOT LATER THAN SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 18TH, WASHINGTON TIME. THE PRESIDENT, OF COURSE, RECOGNIZES THAT THE LEAD TIME PROVIDED TO YOU WILL INFLUENCE THE SCOPE OF YOUR REPORT.

THE PRESIDENT IS ALSO ASKING AL HAIG TO VISIT SAIGON, DEPARTING WASHINGTON JUST AFTER MONDAY'S NSC MEETING. HE WILL WISH TO HAVE GENERAL HAIG'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION FROM THE MILITARY PERSPECTIVE, AS WELL AS YOUR INTIMATE AND MORE DETAILED VIEWS ON POLITICAL SITUATION AT THAT TIME. HAIG CAN ALSO DEBRIEF YOU ON THE NSC MEETING.

THESPRESIDENT WILL ALSO WANT HAIG TO SEE PRESIDENT THIEU DURING THE PERIOD HE IS IN SAIGON AND IS NOW CONSIDERING THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING HAIG TALK PRIVATELY WITH VICE PRESIDENT KY AS WELL.

WE ARE FIRMING UP THE SCOPESOF HAIG'S TRIP NOW AND I WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED VIA THIS CHANNEL. PRESENT THINKING INDICATES THAT HAIG WILL DEPART SAIGON FOR RETURN TRIP ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, VIA CINCPAC.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SAIGON 3163 AND 3154 ON WHICH I WILL COMMENT SEPARATELY.

WARM PERSONAL REGARDS.

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TRANSCRIPTION FOLLOWS

TOP SECRET 161711Z Sep 71 Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only
Via Bunker Channels
From: Henry A. Kissinger
To: Ambassador Bunker, Saigon
Cite: WHS1102

September 16, 1971

The president is convening a meeting of the National Security Council on Monday afternoon, September 20th, Washington time, to discuss the situation in Southeast Asia, with the view toward providing firm guidance to the bureaucracy here. In conjunction with this meeting, he has asked me to obtain your personal assessment of the current situation, to include the security situation but with emphasis on the current political scene. I would be most grateful if you could provide this assessment, via this channel, not later than Saturday morning, September 18th , Washington time. The president, of course, recognizes that the lead time provided to you will influence the scope of your report.

The president is also asking Al Haig to visit Saigon, departing Washington just after Monday's NSC meeting. He will wish to have General Haig's assessment of the security situation from the military perspective, as well as your intimate and more detailed views on political situation at that time. Haig can also debrief you on the NSC meeting.

The president will also want Haig to see President Thieu during the period he is in Saigon and is now considering the desirability of having Haig talk privately with Vice President Ky as well.

We are firming up the scopes of Haig's trip now and I will keep you advised via this channel. Present thinking indicates that Haig will depart Saigon for return trip on Saturday, September 25th, via CINCPAC.

Thank you for your Saigon 0163 and 0164 on which I will comment separately.

Warm personal regards,

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY